

# Suicide Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable changes, behaviors, or statements that indicate directly or indirectly that an individual is contemplating suicide. These can be organized using the work **FACT** as an acronym.

## **F**

### - **Feelings:**

- Hopeless – “Things will never get better.”  
“There’s no point in trying.” Can’t see a future.
- Helpless – “There’s nothing I can do about it.”  
“I can’t do anything right.”
- Worthless – “Everyone would be better off without me.”  
“I’m not worth the effort.”
- Guilt, Shame, Self-Hatred - “What I did was unforgivable.”
- Pervasive sadness.
- Persistent anxiety.
- Persistent agitation.
- Persistent, uncharacteristic anger, hostility or irritability.

## **A**

### - **Actions:**

- Uncharacteristic aggression.
- Risk taking.
- Obtaining a weapon.
- Withdrawal from friends and/or activities.
- Becoming accident-prone.
- Unauthorized absence.
- Getting into trouble, discipline problems.

**C****- Change**

**Personality – more withdrawn, low energy, apathetic or more boisterous, talkative, outgoing.**

**Increased use of alcohol/drugs.**

**Loss of interest in personal appearance, hygiene, neatness of personal items/space.**

**Loss of interest in hobbies, work, sex.**

**Marked decrease in work performance.**

**Sleep, appetite increases or decreases.**

**T****- Threats:**

**Statements – Talking about suicide directly or indirectly, e.g., “How long does it take to bleed to death”, written themes of death, preoccupation with subject of death.**

**Threats - “I won’t be around much longer”, writing suicide note, making direct threat.**

**Plans – Give away prized possessions, making final arrangements, putting affairs (e.g., finances) in order.**

**Sub-lethal gestures or attempts, e.g., overdose, wrist cutting.**

**Aside from threats, none of these signs is a definite indication that the person is going to attempt or commit suicide. Many people experience depression, losses, or changes in behavior or demeanor without considering suicide. However, these signs do indicate that a person is trouble, and a concerned friend or supervisor should inquire as to what is going on and offer help. If a number of these signs occur, they may be important clues.**